

Serial No. 10/055,162
Filed: November 7, 2001
Attorney Docket No. 44471/266135
First Response in Appln. to Non-Final Office Action of 11/17/2005
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REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. The Examiner rejected Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and rejected Claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a). Claims 1-2, 4, 7-8, 10, and 13-14 have been amended in the foregoing amendment. The amendments to Claims 4, 8, and 10 have been made to correct certain translation errors.

Claim 2 is Definite

The Examiner rejected Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner indicated that it is unclear as to the limitations that Claim 2 recites. Claim 2 has been amended to clarify that a tool executing device executes an application program, which conducts the work items according to a tool executing file which contains necessary tool information. Accordingly, Claim 2 is now definite.

The specification describes that the group work cooperation program can be used to access a predetermined storage device for opening (executing) tools (application software) and data (files) required for the respective work steps. Page 9, lines 15-18. The invention of Claim 2 solves the problems encountered in conventional semiconductor device development that are described in the specification on page 2, line 5 to page 3, line 6, *i.e.* that it is difficult for inexperienced engineers to find the software necessary to perform each work step and that some engineers may not be using updated software.

Claims 1-14 Are Patentable over Schloss

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,692,125 to Schloss et al. ("Schloss").

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Claim 1

The group work control system of Claim 1 is for controlling a work having a plurality of work steps for developing semiconductor devices. An example of the work steps includes preparation of circuit designs for the semiconductor device, logic simulation, bonding check, preparation of layout designs, LOT of the designs, Assly request, preparation of masks, preparation of test programs, inventory confirmation, mark arrangement, transferring documents and so forth. *See* page 9, lines 9-18 of the specification. The group work control system of Claim 1 makes it possible for all of the engineers that are working on the same project to share updated schedules related to the development of semiconductor devices, which eliminates duplicative efforts and facilitates the collaboration of the engineers, as described in page 12, line 10 to page 13, line 2 of the specification.

Schloss describes a computer-assisted method for scheduling events. The events are in the medical domain and include the scheduling of chemotherapy sessions. Schloss describes that the invention can also be used in connection with "an engineer domain expert designing a protocol for the manufacture of an article by line workers or by robots; a marketing strategist designing the launch of a new product that has events performed by a telemarketing firm; a loan manager domain expert designing a protocol for a loan office to implement procedures for granting a mortgage; a project manager domain expert designing a protocol for a project with events that will be performed by a contractor; a chemist domain expert designing a protocol for a process to manufacture a composition of matter." However, Schloss does not suggest that it can be used with the development of semiconductor devices, and thus, fails to disclose the claimed invention.

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Claims 2-14

Independent Claims 7, 13 and 14 have been amended to clarify the invention and are patentable for the same reasons as Claim 1. Claims 2-6, and 8-12 depend directly or indirectly from independent Claims 1 or 7. Accordingly, Claims 2-6 and 8-12 also should be allowed.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office Action identified above. This application should now be in condition for allowance, and Applicants solicit a notice to that effect. If there are any issues that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is asked to contact the undersigned at 404.685.6799.

No excess claims fees are believed due; however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 11-0855.

Respectfully submitted,



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